

# ABBEVILLE

## THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ABBEVILLE INSTITUTE

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FALL 2023

### THE ABBEVILLE INSTITUTE AND THE SOUTHERN TRADITION

What is the future of the Southern tradition? This question presents a pressing problem for Americans in the twenty-first century. To those who reduce the Southern tradition to treason and slavery, the answer would be simple: it must be eradicated. Unfortunately, these people dominate the academic and political classes in American society.

The near decade long pogrom on Southern symbols clearly shows that they face little resistance. Even Donald Trump's veto of the bill creating the "Naming Commission" did not stop Congress from enacting the most ahistorical bill of the last several years. Around a hundred Republicans voted to override the veto. Why? Because Southerners were "racist Democrats" who deserved to be punished. This sophomoric understanding of American history is compounded by "conservative" writers, politicians, and influencers who parrot talking points that would satisfy the communist historian Eric Foner. The Southern tradition seems to be on life support.



Abbeville Institute President,  
Brion McClanahan

In April of this year, we organized a conference on the Southern Tradition in the twenty-first century. Some of the speakers offered a rather pessimistic appraisal of the future South, at least in the immediate future. Southerners have lost a sense of their own unique culture, heritage, and tradition. Not long ago, even leftist Southerners still loved the South. Those people have faded into obscurity.

While the Abbeville Institute certainly understands this bleak outlook, there are many positive signs that the Southern tradition is still alive and well in modern America. Thirty years ago, no one was openly discussing decentralization as a legitimate solution to American political conflict. Today, over twenty percent of Americans support secession, and more support some type of decentralization, even those on the Left. More Americans are rejecting an overly commercialized and plastic society, and are choosing instead to embrace localism in economics, education, and culture.

The Southern tradition as defined by a Jeffersonian society is making a comeback. True, many of these developments are small gains in what appears to be a losing effort, but the fact that the anti-Southern forces dedicate so much intellectual and economic capital to defeating the "Lost Cause" means that the Southern tradition, at least on some level, is still vibrant enough to earn their rebuke.

In the last year, the Institute has published over two hundred articles on the Southern tradition. We rebranded our Podcast and produced a short video in support of the Arlington National Cemetery Confederate Monument. We hosted half a dozen Zoom webinars on Southern history and culture and held a “virtual” Summer School for thirteen students where we handed out \$5,000 in scholarship money. The first-place winner in our Summer School essay contest, Cole Branum, is featured in this newsletter.

We are putting the finishing touches on our longstanding “1607 Project: Virginia First” and will launch both the corresponding book and feature documentary during our February 2024 conference at Callaway Gardens in Pine Mountain, GA. And there is much more in store for 2024. The Abbeville Institute has spent twenty years exploring what is true and valuable in the Southern tradition,



and while we may not always get credit for our work, we are making a difference. The Southern tradition deserves our constant cultivation and care, for if we surrender the field, no one will be left to tend the garden. Your continued financial and intellectual support is both appreciated and welcomed. We cannot do this alone, and the fight is far from over.

## **2024 CONFERENCE VIRGINIA FIRST, VIRGINIA FIRST: THE 1607 PROJECT**

Join us at beautiful Callaway Resort and Gardens in Pine Mountain, GA February 16-18, 2024 for fellowship, discussion, and critical examination of the American founding.

Callaway Gardens embodies the spirit of the Southern tradition. With 2500 private acres of nature, walking, hiking, and biking trails, the Cecil B. Day Butterfly center, the rustic Ida Cason Callaway Memorial Chapel with beautiful stained glass and a working pipe organ, Robin Lake Beach, world class golf, and exquisite Southern gardens, Callaway Gardens is a destination that combines the best elements of the South.

Early Registration through December 15, 2023 is \$599 per person or \$1099 per couple. After December 15, 2023, registration is \$699 per person or \$1299 per couple. The conference fee covers all lectures, a supper Friday, February 16, and lunch and supper on February 17 along with all day refreshments and snacks.

The dress code is coat and tie for gentlemen and cocktail attire for ladies for supper on Friday and Saturday, and business casual for the rest of the conference.

You can register by going to our website and clicking on the “Events” section. You can also

send a check payable to the Abbeville Institute to PO BOX 1870, Auburn, AL 36831. Include the name(s) of the attendees and your contact information.

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The Lodge and Spa at Callaway Gardens is a certified four diamond hotel with an award winning restaurant. Guests to the event are encouraged to make room reservations as soon as possible. You can reserve a room by calling 855-706-4317. Room rates are \$209 plus \$40 resort fee and taxes per night. Guests have access to the Gardens.

### **INSTITUTE TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION**



The Abbeville Institute celebrated its twentieth anniversary from April 13-16, 2023 at beautiful Callaway Gardens in Pine Mountain, GA. We welcomed friends old and new for fellowship and fun. Our topic, the Southern Tradition in the 21st Century, sparked discussion and debate among our scholars and attendees. The Gardens were an ideal location for a critical examination of the Southern tradition in the twenty-first century. Attendees were not only treated to great lectures and fellowship, but many enjoyed a guided tour of the world class Callaway Brother Azalea Bowl, a Sunday service at the Ida Cason Callaway memorial chapel led by one of our outstanding young scholars, and the serenity 2,500 acres of nature can provide.

Our topic featured lectures by Dr. Bill Wilson, Dr. Brion McClanahan, Dr. Clyde Wilson, Dr. Bill Watkins, Dr. Tom Daniel, Dr. Paul Gottfried, Dr. Jeff Rogers, Dr. Carey Roberts, Brad Green, and a special presentation of a forthcoming documentary by filmmaker Michael Givens on Southern Jews, produced by Abbeville Institute friend Jack Schewel and featuring Abbeville Institute scholar Dr. Michael Kogan.

Abbeville Institute President Emeritus, Don Livingston, wrapped up the event with a fine lecture on Southern political thought and its application in the 21st century, and was given a first edition of Albert Taylor Bledsoe's *Was Davis a Traitor?* as a gift from the Institute for his tireless dedication to the organization and its mission. It literally would not exist without him, and the two stand-



Don Livingston,

ing ovations for Dr. Livingston were a fine gesture of the appreciation everyone associated with the Institute has for his work, mentoring, and friendship.

We would like to thank the speakers and participants for a grand event, and we hope to see you at our next conference at Callaway Gardens in February 2024. If you could not attend this year's conference, you can purchase a replay of the event at our online academy,

**<https://abbevilleacademy.org>**.

### ANNUAL SUMMER SCHOOL

The Institute held its twentieth annual Summer School online from July 27-29, 2023. The Institute hosted eleven undergraduate or graduate students and two high school students. Our topic, "The Southern Tradition in the 21st Century," could not be more appropriate in our age of anti-Southern propaganda and vitriol. What does the "Southern Tradition" mean for America today? How can Southerners defend and celebrate a tradition that is being denigrated by virtually every major media and academic establishment in the United States?

We were honored to have a robust list of topics and a distinguished group of lecturers for the annual event. These included:

- Dr. John Devanny, Adjunct Professor of History at Christendom College
- Dr. Marshall DeRosa, Professor of Political Science at Florida Atlantic University
- Dr. Don Livingston, President Emeritus and founder of the Abbeville Institute
- Dr. Brion McClanahan, President of the Abbeville Institute
- Dr. Jeff Rogers, Professor at Gordon State College
- Dr. Bill Wilson, Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Virginia

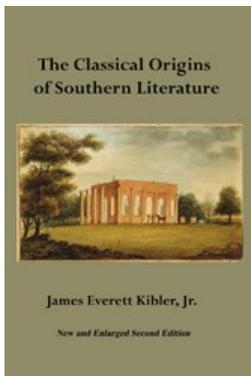
This extraordinary group of scholars presented and discussed an array of topics and questions pertaining to the "Southern Tradition." The sessions included discussions on George Washington's Farewell Address and M.E. Bradford's essay "The Colonial Origins of the Southern Tradition," led by Dr. Brion McClanahan; John Randolph of Roanoke's "Change is Not Reform," led by Dr. John Devanny; Albert Taylor Bledsoe's "Was Davis a Traitor?" led by Dr. Don Livingston; the works of William Gilmore Simms, led by Dr. Jeff Rogers; a lesson on the Confederate Constitution, led by Dr. Marshall DeRosa, and sessions on the Virginia & Kentucky Resolutions, *I'll Take My Stand*, and Southern Agrarian thought, led by Dr. Bill Wilson. In addition, student participants were required to

submit a 2500–5000-word essay on the Southern Tradition in the 21st century and how the tradition is applicable in postmodernity. These essays were presented by the students to the faculty and their peers for review and inquiry. The Institute awarded \$5000 in scholarships to the participants.

### ABBEVILLE INSTITUTE PRESS

The Institute Press has two new releases this year, both by James Kibler:

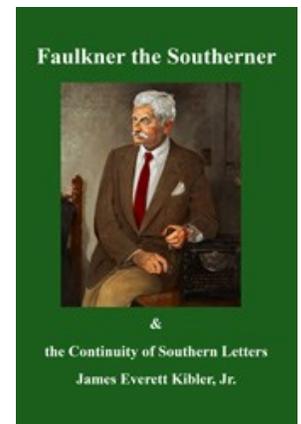
#### ***The Classical Origins of Southern Literature, 2nd edition***



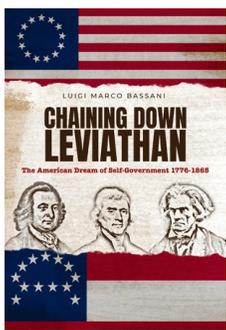
This is the first book-length treatment of the South's veneration of the classics and how it has distinguished her literature and culture for four centuries. In this much enlarged second edition, Kibler includes more authors from the colonial era through James Dickey to broaden his findings and expands the treatment of British cultural ties by showing how both the South and the agrarian English Gentry tradition were shaped from classical models in ways that differed markedly from an American "city upon a hill" mentality.

#### ***Faulkner the Southerner & the Continuity of Southern Letters***

This is the first biography to place Faulkner in the context of his Southern culture and the continuity of Southern letters. Doing so helps prevent glaring misreadings of his fiction. The book's thirteen chapters explore Faulkner's humor, sense of honor, rootedness in place, criticism of the machine culture, and racial attitudes. It treats Faulkner the raconteur, successful farmer, sensitive preservationist, conservative, and Southern traditionalist in the patterns of the English gentry.



#### **Previous Institute Press Publications:**



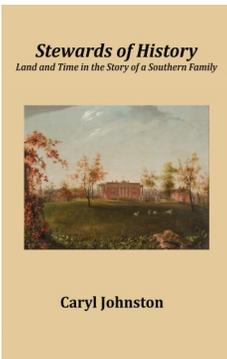
#### ***Chaining Down Leviathan: The American Dream of Self-***

***Government 1776-1865***, By Marco Bissani. Bissani, Professor of the History of Political Thought at the University of Milan, brings a European perspective to the American founding. A study of American political thought between the secession from Britain and the War Between the States.

#### ***Grover Cleveland: The Last Jeffersonian President***, by Ryan Wal-

ters

After Lincoln's counter-revolution, which transformed the Union, Jeffersonian political thought all but disappeared. Yet in the 1880s and 1890s it made a brief comeback with Grover Cleveland, the

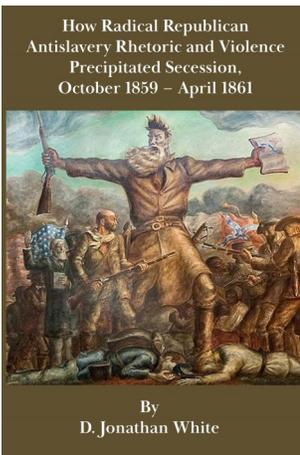
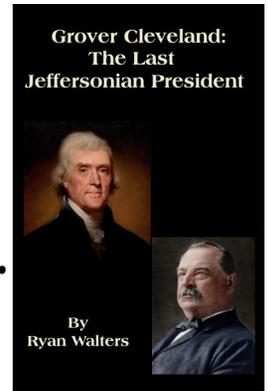


### ***Stewards of History***, by Caryl Johnston

Johnston describes the impact of race, slavery, civil rights and religion in one Southern family over five generations. The core figure of the book is General John Hartwell Cocke (1780-1866) a Virginia planter, antislavery advocate and younger friend and contemporary of Thomas Jefferson.

### ***Last Jeffersonian President***, by Ryan Walters

After Lincoln's counter-revolution, which transformed the Union, Jeffersonian political thought all but disappeared. Yet in the 1880s and 1890s it made a brief comeback with Grover Cleveland, the Thomas Jefferson of the Gilded Age, who tried to return the country to the Age of Jefferson.

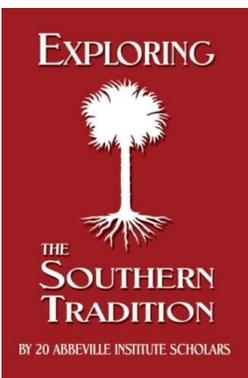
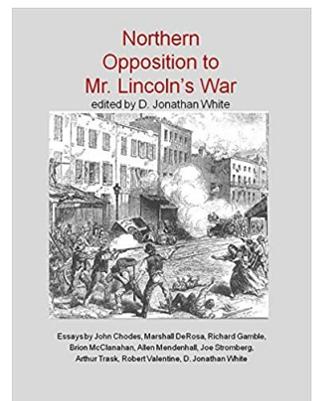


### ***How Radical Republican Antislavery Rhetoric and Violence Precipitated Secession, October 1859-April 1861***, by Jonathan White

This book explores a series of acts of antislavery violence between October 1859 and April 1861, committed by northerners, supported by Republicans, and winked at by the Republican Party. When a Republican was elected to the White House in 1860, southerners interpreted that as an endorsement of such violence, so they voted to leave the Union.

### ***Northern Opposition to Mr. Lincoln's War***, ed. Jonathan White

According to American folklore, the North rose in righteous determination to support Lincoln after the firing on Fort Sumter. In fact, opposition to the war in the North was much more extensive, more respectable, and more patriotic in inspiration than has been allowed. In this ground-breaking work, a number of scholars begin uncovering some of the forgotten aspects of American reaction to the great crisis of 1861-1865.



### ***Exploring the Southern Tradition***, a collection of essays by Abbeville Institute Scholars

What we have known as "the South" has been for four centuries a major part of the American identity. This is true whether measured by population, territory, history, or culture, high and folk. In 2002 a group of scholars led by Donald Livingston founded the Abbeville Institute to combat intellectually the ongoing campaign to eliminate the South from "America," a campaign now dominant in public discourse.

**REVIEW OF KIBLER'S FAULKNER THE SOUTHERNER**, By Geoffrey Long

I know the author personally and was able to see a few pages of the manuscript. I have much anticipated this book as a Faulkner appreciator since my youth.

This book comes at a time in my life when I have been reevaluating the things that I value and wondering where the seemingly instinctual pull towards bedrock, traditional Southern values is coming from. I have wondered why I feel drawn toward my ancestors and toward the importance of place, community, family bonds, preservation of the places and history of my people, etc. Reading this book solidified my own Southernness. Additionally, my love of Faulkner's books has deepened as I have come to appreciate the underpinning of them culturally.

Dr. Kibler draws on a deep knowledge of and understanding of Southern literature that might be unparalleled among the living. The book is filled with references to works that span the entire timeline of the settlement of the Southern states up to the present day. Another treat provided by the author is the personal relationships with some of the scholars and authors he cites. Among the most meaningful is his association with Merriweather who was personally and intimately acquainted with Faulkner. The insights provided by these relationships are unattainable by any other means.

Other than a few editorial mistakes in my early copy, which have been corrected in more recent printings, the book has few flaws. Some will be put off by the politics of it but to take offense at that would reveal a lack of understanding of the book itself, although its criticisms of the abstract and utopic are trenchant.

Lastly, the book has inspired me to take up the pen and try my hand at my old hobby, put some thoughts on paper and continue my novel.

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**WINNING STUDENT ESSAY****Old Foundations, New Beginnings**

Cole J. Branham

**Introduction**

What is the current state of the southern tradition? Is it practical in the 21st century and beyond? If so, how does it manifest itself and where is it going? The southern tradition is complex and not well understood by most, entirely forgotten by others. Yet, it still remains and serves as a subconscious counterweight in the American mind. Richard Weaver made clear, the southern tradition has been perpetually at bay since 1865; always there as an alternative and a critique of the mainstream, but has not yet had the opportunity to re-enter the fold. However, a growing number of Americans

have rekindled the embers of this tradition and are igniting the spirit of the South throughout the country. The southern tradition provides rich wisdom and presents practical opportunities to those looking for reactionary alternatives to modern America. This century certainly presents its challenges, but there is also hope of redemption. We are living in a time where people, by the thousands, are actively choosing to reject the current American path and return to something older, more reliable, and permanent.

In the 21st century, the southern tradition is manifesting itself in three main ways. Although it may not be recognized as such by many, the motives are fundamentally derived from it. Individuals are politically embracing aspects of the southern tradition. More and more conservatives, especially younger ones, are turning away from the tired and frail Republican Party of Lincoln because of their uninspiring message and failure to follow through on principled policy. These same individuals are looking for an alternative, and many are rediscovering the southern strain of conservative thought, or at least a paleoconservative dispensation. They seek to dismantle the administrative state and return power to the citizenry. The choice of Americans to migrate from the cities and suburbs back to the farmlands and small towns to pursue a less complicated, more secluded, and pastoral life is one way people are embracing the agrarianism of the southern tradition and detaching themselves from the modern social state. Another is their choice to educate their children at home and remove them from the modern educational state, which has proven itself vehemently corrupt and incapable of useful instruction. Likewise, many are moving away from established mainline religion and returning to conservative and reformed churches that distinguish themselves from the liberalized theology and megachurch culture of the last thirty years.

The southern tradition remains unchanged, albeit with a couple minor circumstantial adjustments. However, politically, culturally, and spiritually, it remains constant. What is changing is people's willingness to consider it more seriously and engage with it on practical levels in their everyday lives. Ultimately, the southern tradition is about decentralized power, small scale initiative, and localism. The political and cultural revival that we are witnessing embodies these aspects of the tradition and primes us for a reactionary resurgence that propels us to restoration.

### **Dismantling Leviathan: The Southern Remedy**

The American empire seems to be on its way out; hanging on to the edge of a cliff by a single finger. The government that oversees these United States has grown to encompass every facet of the American citizen's life. Endless bureaucracy, obsessive regulation and taxation, inflation beyond

comprehension, and organized despotism have created something that makes Hobbes's "Leviathan" look like a garter snake. Many are looking to reform the system in a way that restores the federal Republic the Founders created. There is a collective hunger and desire by millions of Americans to reestablish the vision of our original intention.

The southern tradition provides much of the remedy needed to restore the founding vision and reform American politics and culture to a more stable, ancient model. In *The Paleoconservatives: New Voices of the Old Right*, Clyde Wilson authors a chapter titled "Restoring the Republic" in which he describes the need for reaction and renewal. Wilson asserts that our ability to restore the Republic depends upon "whether we have enough moral and social substance left to be a self-governing people."<sup>1</sup>

Wilson argues that the inhibitors of restoration are the "consolidation of power and the decay of virtue." He further asserts that there is a symbiosis between these two and they continually depend on and feed off each other.<sup>2</sup> There are several political concepts, based on the southern tradition, which can help dismantle the leviathan state. Some of these include a strict constructionist view of the U.S. Constitution, the supremacy of the 10th Amendment, the repeal of the 14th, 16th, and 17th Amendments, limits on taxing and spending, balanced budget amendments, term limits, heavily reduced or nonexistent immigration, and state action through calling a constitutional convention.<sup>3</sup>

There are few, but some examples of politicians or legislation that embody the southern tradition, without identifying it as such. Currently, Senator Rand Paul and Representative Thomas Massie, both of Kentucky, are some of the only elected officials nationally that routinely propose legislation that attempts to dismantle the administrative state and promote state's rights. They are also the only ones to routinely vote against their own party's legislation when it violates the Constitution and hold them accountable for it. Similarly, 2024 presidential candidate Vivek Ramaswamy, of Cincinnati, OH, is the only Republican in the primary proposing actionable items in detail of how to dismantle the behemoth bureaucracy and administrative oligarchy we have and also addresses the cultural and spiritual crisis we have, especially among young folks. At the legislative level, the Supreme Court's decision to reverse *Roe v. Wade* allows state governments to enact legislation based off the interests of the state. In addition, other recent circuit court decisions show promise that the proper reading of the Constitution is not yet dead and gone. However, we should approach these advances with caution as Wilson argues that these actions must come from the bottom up and citizens must drive these reforms, without heavy reliance on politicians to "steward" our interests.

We must surely make dismantling the administrative state a priority for the restoration of our federal Republic, but we must also restore ourselves culturally, spiritually, and morally. It

requires a holistic approach to society. Wilson reminds us that looking to government reform or even the restoration of republican government will not solve all our issues because “the ends of human life do not rest in government” and are not forged in power.<sup>4</sup> This is why Wilson argues that American citizens must impose limits and restraints upon government not only externally, but internally. He writes that they must shed their dependence on the corrupt system, demand a return of resources, and live in such a way that naturally preserves liberty.<sup>5</sup>

### **Familial Economy & Reactionary Counter-Culture**

Hyper-globalism, domestic decline, and organized wokeism have run America dry, leaving people, particularly younger generations, dissatisfied with the current order yearning for identity, meaning, and belonging. Current America cannot offer them anything of substance and many have been convinced that radical alternatives, not rooted in the American historical experience, are the next available option. However, simultaneously, there is an equal reactionary response among younger generations that want to reground America in her historical roots. They are looking to promote decentralization and political reform as well as individually disassociate themselves with modern America and rediscover or build alternatives based on the qualities of the southern tradition. This is the two-pronged approach described by Clyde Wilson in which citizens work to dismantle leviathan but also decrease the dependence on a thoroughly corrupt state and society. This manifests itself by individuals and families making conscious decisions to “opt-out” of the cultural mainstream in a variety of ways. They opt out of consumerism, mainstream media, political parties, public schools, the market, and much more. We are witnessing a mass exodus from the establishment fabric modernism has woven for us.

Among this group is the desire to return to the simplicities of local economies and self-reliance. Many are moving out of their urban and suburban homes and buying land in rural and remote areas of the country to pursue this lifestyle. Allan Carlson in, “From Cottage to Work Station...And Back Again: The Family and Home Education,” details this return to homesteading and cottage crafts, while connecting it to an agrarian revival. Carlson writes that a generation of families are returning to the classical approach of the family farm and reestablishing familial economies. He explains that this design prepares successive generations to continue the legacy of their parents and maintain familial autonomy and sustainability.<sup>6</sup>

This is something unexpected and surprising given the historical trend in land ownership and industrialized culture in America. From Reconstruction to the end of WWII, the number of farmers in the country declined from 75% to 17% and the number of agricultural workers from 53% to 15%. As of 2021, small family farms make up about 88% of all U.S. farms, accounting for less than 20% of

national food production and representing about 3% of the U.S. population.<sup>7</sup> However, this overall decline has become more stagnant and actually shows signs of reversing. Furthermore, the production rate of family farms continues to decrease, primarily because new and existing small farmers and homesteaders are not interested in selling to the government, and are growing for themselves and their local communities. The revival of this cottage or small farm culture includes a rerouting of familial priorities and resources that aid in distancing oneself from the mainstream market. Carlson writes that these households aim at self-sufficiency and try to often recreate the life of their ancestors by growing their own food, canning and preserving their produce, raising livestock, participating in agricultural pursuits, trades, and education through mediums like Future Farmers of America and 4-H. This, and so much more, is seen as a restorative approach to liberty and the dignity of work and family.<sup>8</sup> And it is an essential component of the southern tradition because it is rooted in place, family, and property.

Richard Weaver argued that private property was the last metaphysical right because it served as a barrier against encroachment of all other rights and protected the sanctity of family life and liberty. The family farm has always been a space of resistance and preservation of localized opposition and agrarianism. This was articulated by the Fugitives or Southern Agrarians in the 1930s through their works, *I'll Take My Stand: The South and the Agrarian Tradition* and *Who Owns America? A New Declaration of Independence*. Both of these works touted a strong defense of private property, land ownership and stewardship, and the family farm model as foundational approaches to oppose and prevent consolidated government and an idle citizenry. The return to this model, innate to the southern tradition and Jeffersonian America, is incredibly promising.

Another crucial aspect of the developing reactionary counter-culture is a resurgence in the homeschool movement. The recent pandemic opened the eyes of millions of parents to what their children were being taught in the public-school classrooms. To those familiar to the homeschool movement, and even the southern tradition, it should come as no surprise that indoctrination and radicalization for the purposes of organized despotism and revolution is the result of state-funded education. However, many parents were surprised to learn just how bad it is and prompted their exit from the public-school systems.

Carlson continues his discussion on the family and home education in his chapter, "From Cottage to Work Station...And Back Again: The Family and Home Education." He argues that in much of America, prior to the War Between the States, rural families educated their children at home and "in home"; meaning that they learned the processes of farming and homemaking to preserve the familial structure. As public schools became more common and legislative, it took children out of the home, away from the farm, and ultimately, out of the tradition. The state quickly

assumed responsibility for child rearing and we are now seeing the devastating consequences of this system.<sup>9</sup> Teachers unions and school boards now refer to concerned parents who question them as “domestic terrorists”, “conspiracy theorists”, and “white supremacists” and lecture them on how parents have no right to parent or educate their own child. Bringing our children home and instilling them with a classical education and the traditional values of our culture is the best thing we can do for them if there is not a Bible-based parochial school in your locale. The homeschool movement is experiencing its own revival and provides “dissenters” with an alternative to give their child a true education and also involve them in reestablishing traditional home culture. Carlson continues that despite all the obstacles the government and our society imposes, the family “cannot ever be extinguished” and being familial is embedded in human nature.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, Carlson contends that homeschooling “is the most promising effort at family institutional reconstruction...in America during the last 150 years” and it may be the catalyst for the restoration of ordered liberty in the future.<sup>11</sup>

Perhaps the greatest result of the homeschool-homestead movement is that it reestablishes stability, respect, and honor between generations of a family; and more largely, an entire culture.<sup>12</sup> The ability of generations to convey wisdom and knowledge to successive ones is crucial for a tradition to survive and maintain itself. The southern tradition, while not a dominant political actor in the American arena, has been able to convey the wisdom of the past to future generations. It has primarily done this through family. One of the core aspects of the southern tradition has always been family; from family flows everything else.

### **Reformation & Revival**

A crucial aspect to the southern tradition’s potential resurgence is the return to a strong and principled Christianity, rooted in our historical experience. The Old South was a place of religious pluralism in the sense that the government and your neighbors would not infringe on your right to attend the congregation of your choosing, unlike many of their counterparts in New England. However, despite an array of denominations throughout the South, the majority, from high-church Episcopalians in the Virginia Tidewater to backwoods Baptists in Alabama, subscribed to a reformed theology inherited from the Protestant Reformation and carefully preserved down through history. This reformed theology informed the culture and regulated the customs and social thought in the South, without becoming a politicized ideology as it did with the Puritans.

Reformed Christianity differs from what the majority of American Christians have practiced since the Second World War. It does not resemble the predominant emotionalism and megachurch cul-

ture that has pervaded and weakened Christianity. This is not the faith of John Hagee, Joel Osteen, Henry Ward Beecher, or Kenneth Copeland. It is the faith understood and practiced by men such as John Calvin, John Knox, Robert Lewis Dabney, James Henley Thornwell, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, Thomas Smyth, and John Lafayette Girardeau. With its emphasis on doctrine and Biblical inerrancy, it presents a formidable faith that is rooted in Scripture and God's grace alone, through faith in Christ's completed work alone, and for the glory of God alone.

An increasing number of primarily young (under 35) evangelical or conservative Christians are building a solidified movement back to a fundamental faith and developed theology. There is a steady revival of reformed Christianity in the South, as well as other parts of the country. Collin Hansen's book, *Young, Restless, and Reformed* explores this growing return to the reformed tradition. He writes that conservative Christian youth in America are tired and frustrated with the lack of spiritual backbone modern Christian churches have and that they have resorted to what Hansen calls "therapeutic deism", in which God is formed in the image of what makes individuals feel comfortable and happy.<sup>13</sup> Alternatively, reformed Christianity forms God in the image of how God defines Himself as stated in scripture. Hansen writes, "Reformed theology may go down like a stiff drink, but it gives Christians a backbone."<sup>14</sup> Young, conservative Christians want a faith that has moral fiber and a spine. Reformed Christianity, in the vein of the southern tradition, offers this. Hansen states, "Our secular age narrows the options: Either God is for you, on your own terms, or God sets the terms. Reformed theology offers a compelling biblical case for why we should not trust ourselves, and why we can trust the crucified and risen Jesus. Reformed theology shows us God as transcendent and inscrutable, yet immanent and sympathetic."<sup>15</sup> It is this theological perspective and realistic outlook of man's sinful nature and his need for redemption not of his own doing that derives a negative liberty approach to government and society. This theological underpinning and approach to liberty informs the southern tradition and it is fundamentally necessary for the restoration of the Republic as the Founders intended, because this was the Christianity they understood to be true.

If the practice of the Christian faith and its influence on society is to endure the current cultural and spiritual revolution, it will need to offer a vision of God on God's terms and a way of life more demanding and compelling than modernity's gospel. And that's what Reformed theology has always offered, especially in its southern context. It is a God who governs all things according to His providence.<sup>16</sup>

## Outlook

The southern tradition's political and cultural recommendations still apply, as they always have, and serve as a source of reaction and renewal. It remains to be seen if the southern tradition will garner the support of the public in a form of organized politics. There are currently many barriers to entry for the southern tradition to be a contender on a national platform. The weaponized Left and ignorant Right simply will not allow an honest discussion of the historical record or political theory. However, as stated in the beginning, the status quo is waning and there is a hunger for new beginnings built on old foundations. The people of America are demanding accountability and want their country back.

The developments on both small and large scales are a sign of possible future convergence and cohesion that is helping set the stage for the southern tradition's encore. We ought to encourage localized movements that preserve our culture, protect our heritage, rebuild the family, and disassociate and dissent from the mainstream. It is no longer enough that we simply state what we are for or what we support. We must form an active ground game that builds collaborative partnerships that strengthen our cause.

Additionally, we must restore the proper understanding of the Founding and ensure this understanding is passed on for subsequent generations. This requires us to prepare education, build institutions, and use 21st century means of communication and media to introduce people to these concepts and ideas; as well as the historically grounded reasoning for them. We must do everything in our capacity to reestablish a true understanding of the American Founding as those who founded it conceived and hold the American historical record accountable to these truths.

## Conclusion

The southern tradition remains a source of immense wisdom for all. The trajectory of history and current events have vindicated the southern tradition in the hearts and minds of those who cherish it. But it has also been vindicated for so many others, who recognize its value and are beginning to explore it. The task in this century is to conserve and curate it in a way that preserves its integrity while making its case publicly so that it will be ready for resurrection at that moment which the Lord predestines. However, in the meantime, declare yourself and your family independent from the American empire, live by example, and invite others into the tradition. Build new beginnings on old foundations. The southern tradition provides a comprehensive framework that fuels and preserves society, but it requires the best of the citizenry to maintain it. If we are going to restore the Republic, in the form of the southern tradition, it will take more than just Southerners to achieve it. For as M.E. Bradford stated in his accomplished work, *Remembering Who We Are: Observations of a Southern Conservative*, "In finding a solution...in keeping with our heritage and in transmitting it

beyond the confines of our region, we cannot, must not fail. For in our enterprise, the fate of more than the South lies in the balance.”

Our current state of affairs, alongside the reactionary developments discussed, gives the southern tradition an opportunity for true revival and use. The tradition and principles it contains is steadfast and has always been there throughout American history as an option to reroute the country back to its roots. It extends an olive branch as an invitation and it is up to us to accept.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Clyde Wilson, “Restoring the Republic,” in *The Paleoconservatives: New Voices of the Old Right*, ed. by Joseph Scotchie (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1999), 184.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 183-184.

<sup>4</sup> Wilson, 187.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 184-185.

<sup>6</sup> Allen Carlson, “From Cottage to Work Station...And Back Again: The Family and Home Education,” in *The Paleoconservatives: New Voices of the Old Right*, ed. by Joseph Scotchie (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1999), 132.

<sup>7</sup> Alexandra Nseir, “Family-owned farms account for 96% of U.S. farms, according to the Census of Agriculture Typology Report: Small family farms make up 88% of all U.S. farms,” United States Department of Agriculture National Agricultural Statistics Service, accessed July 19, 2023, <https://www.nass.usda.gov/Newsroom/archive/2021/01-22-2021.php>

<sup>8</sup> Carlson, 132.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, 133-34.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 141.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 142.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 135.

<sup>13</sup> Collin Hansen, ““Still Young, Restless, and Reformed? The New Calvinists at 10,” 9Marks, Accessed July 19, 2023, <https://www.9marks.org/article/still-young-restless-and-reformed-the-new-calvinists-at-10/>

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> M.E. Bradford, *Remembering Who We Are: Observations of a Southern Conservative*, (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1985), 64.



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